

'DREAMY' CHRISTMAS GIFTS

The star of Bethlehem was a star of joy.
 "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy." – **D. James Kennedy**

"I have been all over the world, and I have never met anyone who regretted giving his or her life to Christ." – **Billy Graham**

"Slowly and surely, we learn the great secret of life, which is to know God." –
Oswald Chambers

"God did not spring forth from eternity; He brought forth eternity" – **C.H. Spurgeon**

"The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home." – **St. Augustine**

"Christmas: that magic blanket that wraps itself about us, that something so intangible that it is like a fragrance. It may weave a spell of nostalgia. Christmas may be a day of feasting, or of prayer, but always it will be a day of remembrance, a day in which we think of everything we have ever loved." –
Augusta E. Rundel

"During the Christmas season, I hope that you own times of excitement and sharing and fellowship will leave you with a special gift – memories that will last a lifetime." –
James Dobson

It is amazing to see all of the supernatural happenings that took place during the times leading up to and immediately following the birth of Jesus. We will look into these things today and pay attention to the dreams, prophecies, visions, and angelic visitations that are an essential part of the true Christians story.

- The Christmas story in **Matthew**.
 - Joseph has an angelic visitation in a dream.

Conception and Birth of Jesus

18Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." 22Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." 24And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. **Matthew 1:18-25 NASB**

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- The Magi (wise men) find the baby Jesus whom they were seeking and then are warned by God in a dream to leave 'another' way!

The Visit of the Magi

1Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” 3When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

6‘AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH,

ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH;

FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER

WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.’ ”

7Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. 8And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found *Him*, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.” 9After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over *the place* where the Child was. 10When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12And having been warned *by God* in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

Matthew 2:1-12 NASB

- Joseph has a dream with an angelic visitation.

The Flight to Egypt

13Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord *appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.” 14So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. 15He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.” **Matthew 2:13-15 NASB**

- Joseph again has an angelic visitation in a dream.

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16Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. 17Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

18“A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEeping AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEeping FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE.”

19But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord *appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, 20“Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.” 21So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. **Matthew 2:16-21 NASB**

- Once again God sends an angel to speak to Joseph in a dream.

22But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned *by God* in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, 23and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

- The Christmas story in **Luke**.
 - An angel of the Lord visits Zacharias and foretells the birth of John the Baptist.

Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

5In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. 8Now it happened *that* while he was performing his priestly service before God in the *appointed* order of his division, 9according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12Zacharias was troubled when he saw *the angel*, and fear gripped him. 13But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb. 16And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

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18Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this *for certain*? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years." 19The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time." 21The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. 22But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. 23When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. 24After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, 25"This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked *with favor* upon *me*, to take away my disgrace among men." **Luke 1:5-25 NASB**

- The angel Gabriel appears to Mary and foretells the miraculous birth of Jesus.

Jesus' Birth Foretold

26Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you." 29But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." 34Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 36And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 37For nothing will be impossible with God." 38And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. **Luke 1:26-38 NASB**

- In **Luke 1:38-44**, Mary visits Elizabeth (John's mother) and Elizabeth prophesies to Mary.
- In **Luke 1:46-56**, Mary prophesies in her 'magnificent'...
- In **Luke 1:67-80**, Zacharias prophesies about John the Baptist
- In **Luke 2:1-20**, Jesus is born and an angel appears to the shepherds in a field.

8In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the

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Lord. 12This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men whom He is pleased." 15When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." 16So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. 17When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. 18And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. 19But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. **Luke 2:8-20 NASB**

- In **Luke 2:25-35**, Simeon proclaims the Word of God to Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.

25And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, 28then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29"Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; 30For my eyes have seen Your salvation, 31Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel." 33And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. 34And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— 35and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

- In **Luke 2:36-38**, Anna the prophetess speaks over Jesus.

36And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband seven years after her marriage, 37and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. 38At that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. **Luke 2:36-38 NASB**

How might the Lord want to speak to you about Jesus entering into your life at a new level?

How might He burst through the familiarity of your walk with Him a fresh understanding of Jesus who lives in you?

Lord...what would You say to us? How would You reveal yourself to us in these days when we celebrate Jesus being born amongst us?